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How to teach vocabulary effectively

An analysis of the course book Eyes and Spies

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Francisca Fortes and José Santos and my three brothers, Adiel, Heber and Danilson, who have demonstrated real love, and admiration.

I love you, my family.

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Abstract

Vocabulary instruction is important to help learners develop the kind of vocabulary knowledge that will contribute to their language learning success. The kind of vocabulary instruction that learners will need to achieve success should include reference to explicit and independent vocabulary instruction. So, course books should provide these kinds of vocabulary instructions that learners need to develop their vocabulary repertoire. Thus, this study examines how effective the course book *Eyes and Spies* is in terms of vocabulary instruction and it will be designed based on these two research questions:

1- What are the characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction?

2- What are the characteristics of vocabulary instruction used in the course book *Eyes and Spies* to teach vocabulary?

I collected data by identifying all the vocabulary items used in the course book, and then I examined how they are taught taking into account the characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction. The findings show that in terms of instructing vocabulary explicitly the course book *Eyes and Spies* is useful and effective. However, there is a lack of mention of how learners can become independent.

Introduction

In the field of foreign language instruction research, researchers have been searching for the most effective ways to teach vocabulary. It is commonly accepted that the knowledge of word meanings plays a key role in language comprehension. Therefore, vocabulary instruction should be effective in order for learners to use the instructed words meaningfully. One reason for this fact is that students learn more when they are actively involved.

Although it is accepted that the knowledge of vocabulary is one of the main keys for successful communication in language, some English teachers even recognising the importance of vocabulary knowledge do not reflect about how successfully vocabulary can be presented. There are some course books used in the classroom that often disagree to what experts in methodology perceive as effective vocabulary instruction. Therefore, this paper is intended to provide a theoretical basis related to effective instruction to teach vocabulary instruction. In addition, this paper is intended to examine how useful the course book *Eyes and Spies* is focusing on effective vocabulary instruction.

This thesis contains two chapters. The first chapter presents the literature review section and it includes the following topics: some definitions about vocabulary and the importance of vocabulary knowledge are addressed. Then, issues in vocabulary acquisition are discussed. Vocabulary acquisition cannot be separated from vocabulary instruction because to focus on effective vocabulary instruction it is important to know how vocabulary is learnt. In addition, three types of vocabulary instruction are presented, which are explicit, implicit and independent vocabulary instruction. The use of visual aids when teaching vocabulary and the criteria required for the visual aids to be useful are also addressed. Other important considerations in vocabulary instruction are emphasized. Finally, a look at which words should be taught are highlighted. It is not worth spending time focusing on how to teach vocabulary successfully if what is being taught is not relevant. Then, the conclusions of the literature review are presented.

The second chapter presents the primary research. The methodology used in this study is addressed there. Additionally, the results and the analysis of the results are discussed. By the end, it presents the conclusions and the recommendations. The recommendation section will be written according to what is found in the conclusions. I hope that this thesis will help

teachers evaluate the kind of vocabulary instruction they use in the classroom and adjust their methods accordingly.

Chapter I

Literature review

1- What is vocabulary?

Many authors have similar definitions about vocabulary. According to Hubbard (1983) vocabulary can be defined as a powerful carrier of meaning. Additionally, Diamond & Gutlohn (2006) suggest that vocabulary is the knowledge of words and their meanings. This means that without establishing a strong vocabulary base first, comprehension and use of a language will not be achieved. In addition, the student should be able to recognise words, and know their meanings as well. Thus, when a student is effectively able to recognise and use a word in different contexts, speak, write, pronounce the word well, she/he has the knowledge and meaning of that word.

However, some authors suggest more complex definitions about vocabulary. Nation (2001) states that vocabulary knowledge implies knowing a word in the spoken form of the word and the spoken form can be recognised and understood it in and out of context rather than guessed at. Additionally, Henriksen (1996) states that vocabulary knowledge is often defined as precise comprehension which is operationalized as the ability to translate the lexical items into L1, the ability to find the right definition in a multiple-choice task, or the ability to give a target language paraphrase. This means that vocabulary knowledge requires the ability to react to words that students do not need to think about. The words just come into students' minds to be used in an effective and natural way. Even in a multiple choice task students react to the multiple definitions of words and they know exactly the meaning of the words to be translated. So, when students have knowledge of a word they do not take much time to think about the word, they just have to use the word naturally and appropriately.

In short, what the definitions above about vocabulary have in common is the fact that vocabulary knowledge requires not only word meanings knowledge, but it requires the usage of the words in the appropriate context and in a natural way and also includes the relationship between new words acquired and the ones already acquired. Therefore, teachers should use

strategies that teach the meaning of words in context and help students associate the new vocabulary learned and what they already knew and help students memorise the words and their meanings.

1.1 - The importance of vocabulary knowledge

The knowledge of word meanings and the ability to access that knowledge efficiently are recognized as important factors in reading and listening comprehension, speaking and writing fluency.

Thus, vocabulary knowledge helps students with language comprehension. Like Widdowson (1989), McKeown (2002) argue that vocabulary knowledge is the heart of a language comprehension and use. Additionally, Barra (1995) suggests that to comprehend a text successfully students need to have sufficient word knowledge. This is to say that the comprehension of a language depends on the amount of words that are known in that language. Also, students need to have sufficient word knowledge to understand what they read. Students can understand a writer's message only if they know the meaning of most of the words used in a text. Still, Nation (2001) states that readers need to know at least 97% of the vocabulary in a text for an adequate understanding of it. Without knowledge of the key vocabulary in a text, a learner may have serious trouble in understanding the message, that is, word knowledge is crucial to reading comprehension and determines how well students will be able to comprehend the texts they read. So, having students with a large amount of vocabulary knowledge is essential to language comprehension.

In addition, vocabulary helps students with language production. Hubbard (1983) states that the more words a student knows the more precisely that student can express the exact meaning he/she wants to. Based on this view, to communicate effectively students need to know a large number of word meanings. Likewise, Cardenas (2001) states that vocabulary is used to determine the proficiency a student has in oral context. This is to say that vocabulary is an essential component to determine how much a student is able to communicate successfully. So, students have to overcome the lack of vocabulary knowledge in order to communicate effectively. Language teachers should focus on effective instruction to teach vocabulary to help students to develop their vocabulary knowledge in order to communicate successfully. However, the focus of the instruction was not always on the vocabulary. So, the next section is intended to provide a brief background of vocabulary instruction.

1.2. Brief background of vocabulary instruction

In this section, I intend to write a brief background of vocabulary instruction because vocabulary instruction was not given too much attention in the language teaching/ learning process. In addition, I present some reasons why vocabulary instruction was not given much attention in the past.

Some authors state that vocabulary instruction was traditionally undervalued and teachers gave little attention to techniques to help students learn vocabulary as well. According to Carter & McCarthy (1988), in the past, vocabulary was considered a “neglected aspect” in the process of language instruction. Some authors present some reasons for neglecting vocabulary and vocabulary techniques in the past. Allen (1983) argues that for many years, vocabulary instruction was not given the recognition and attention that it deserves in the foreign language classroom. She suggests that in methodology courses so little was said about how to teach words and their meanings. Some specialists in methodology seemed to believe that the meaning of words could not be adequately taught, so it was better not to try to teach them. Many teachers began to notice that vocabulary instruction is not a simple matter. In fact, this view is true in the sense that vocabulary instruction is not only a matter of teaching that a certain word in one language means the same as a word in another language. Much more needs to be learned and there were many teachers who felt unconfident to teach vocabulary in the classroom. So, specialists gave the impression that it was better not to teach vocabulary at all.

Additionally, Nation (1988) argues that teachers used to argue that it was difficult for teachers to predict what vocabulary students would need. Moreover, Zimmerman (1997) defends that teachers used to think that if they gave over attention to vocabulary, learners would have the impression that learning a language was just the accumulation of words. So, teachers tended not to teach vocabulary. Additionally, Carthy & McCarthy (1988) state that the specialists in methodology fear that students would make mistakes in sentence construction if too many words were learned before the basic grammar knowledge. The idea above is partially true because knowing a large number of meaning words is not enough to construct a sentence with sense. This is to say that students without a basic knowledge of grammar can make mistakes when making sentences.

However, Wilkins (1972) as cited in Carter & McCarthy, (1988) states that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. This is to say that without establishing a strong base of vocabulary knowledge a student cannot communicate successfully. And without a knowledge of grammar students can communicate, although not effectively. But, without a good knowledge of vocabulary it is extremely difficult to communicate and beginning students often manage to communicate in English by using the accumulative effect of individual words. For example, a student who says “Yesterday, go disco and friends dancing” will almost certainly get much of his/her message over despite completely avoiding the grammar (Hubbard, 1983). The meaning is conveyed by the vocabulary alone. In this case, a good knowledge of grammar is not such a powerful tool for understanding the message. So, vocabulary knowledge is an essential component of language comprehension.

Nowadays, vocabulary instruction is seen as a meaningful tool to be instructed and learnt in meaningful contexts (Scrivener, 1994). Despite the neglected aspect of vocabulary instruction in the past, its instruction and learning have been given much attention in the classroom in the last two decades (Douglas, 2000). Still, according to Douglas (2000), instead of giving students long list of words without any context as teachers used to do in the past, some teachers are more and more concerned about effective ways to transmit knowledge of vocabulary to students.

In addition, Carter & McCarthy (1988) state that teachers are becoming conscious of the relevance and importance of vocabulary instruction and they are conscious of their role as facilitators and guides, so teachers have given important steps to call students’ attention to the importance of focus on lexical form and teachers have paid attention to successful strategies to teach vocabulary as well. Thus, the instruction of vocabulary has come a long way in recent years and it is becoming more prevalent. Issues in vocabulary learning cannot be divorced from vocabulary instruction. So, the next step is intended to show how vocabulary acquisition is developed by learners.

1.3 - Issues in vocabulary acquisition

Researchers usually suggest that vocabulary can be broken down into two forms: oral vocabulary and reading vocabulary. Oral vocabulary by its turn is broken down into speaking and listening that refers to words that we use in speaking or recognise in listening, while reading vocabulary is broken down into reading and writing that refers to words we recognise or use in print (Cardenas, 2001). These two forms of vocabulary are related to receptive and productive vocabulary, two relevant concepts in vocabulary acquisition whose distinction has been discussed by researchers over the years.

Many authors suggest similar definitions about receptive vocabulary and productive vocabulary. According to (Kamil & Hiebert) receptive or passive vocabulary refers to words that students assign some meaning, even if they do not know their full definitions. Similarly, Tschirner (2004) states that receptive vocabulary refers to words students understand, but they do not have to use them. Wesche & Paribkht, (1993) define productive vocabulary or active vocabulary as being words that students use when they speak or write, that is, productive vocabulary includes speaking and writing skills. This is to say that productive vocabulary refer to those words students use while they are speaking or writing.

Several attempts have been made to distinguish these two perspectives. Most authors argue that receptive vocabulary is acquired first, followed by productive vocabulary. Channel (1988) supports the view that learners gain receptive control of new words before active control. This is to say that if a word is known productively it means that the word is already known receptively, that is, comprehension precedes production. In the process of vocabulary acquisition a word is recognised and understood firstly and only later students are able to use it in context in appropriate situations and in a natural way.

In addition, receptive vocabulary is easier to learn than productive vocabulary. In a study performed by Waring (1996) measuring the amount of vocabulary knowledge of some Japanese English learners he concludes that learning words productively takes longer than learning words receptively. That is, it takes more time to use words effectively in different context than the understanding of word meanings used by the teacher.

A student's receptive vocabulary is typically larger than productive vocabulary. In the same study performed by Waring (1996) he states that if a high frequency word is known receptively there is a good chance (64%) that it will be known productively. This means that a student may recognise a word or may know that word meaning, however, he/she may not know how to use that word effectively while communicating. Students know far more words receptively than productively. Thus, not all words known receptively are known productively.

Vocabulary acquisition is a continuum process. Melka (1997) states that "the distance between receptive and productive word knowledge is a line and it is a continuum of knowledge" (p99). In addition, Faerch & Phillipson, (1984) suggest that we should think of vocabulary knowledge as a continuum line between the ability to make sense of a word and the ability to activate the word for productive purposes.

Also, Palmerg (1987) states "At one end of the continuum we have... potential vocabulary...moving along the continuum we have real vocabulary ... which includes those foreign language words that learners have learned at some stage in the learning process, and that they can either only understand (passive and real vocabulary) or both understand and use (active real vocabulary)" (p 201). These authors share the same view that vocabulary acquisition is a continuum line of knowledge. That is, students gradually acquire vocabulary knowledge. This means that they have in common the view that vocabulary acquisition follows some steps to be understood and be used actively and appropriately by the learner.

Moreover, Henriksen (1996) suggests a model of vocabulary development acquisition based on three hierarchical stages: the first stage is partial-precise continuum. In this stage the student begins to recognise the words used by the teacher or while reading a text, but he/she does not know their meanings and how to use them. The receptive – productive continuum is the second level. In this level as the student moves along he/she begins to understand word meanings and they know how to use them in some contexts; the student begins to have a precise understanding of the words. The third stage is depth- of-knowledge continuum. In this stage students finally understand words in different contexts and they use those words as well. This is to say that this stage measures how well a word is known.

On the other hand, Eicholz and Barbe (1996) develop their scale of vocabulary acquisition based on six hierarchical stages in the process of vocabulary acquisition. Their scale is described below:

0- A word is completely unknown.

1- The student has seen or heard the word, but has shown little if any reaction to it.

2- The student is now ready to react to the word in some way.

3- The student has looked in a dictionary and asked about or guessed at the meaning of the word.

4- The student has a vague meaning of the word and he/she is able to define it in a very vague way.

5- The word has become part of the student's vocabulary and he/she uses it with facility and has given it concrete meaning.

In short, receptive vocabulary leads to productive vocabulary, that is, receptive vocabulary is the first contact learners have with the vocabulary items, which makes the method of instruction very important. So, teachers and the course books used in the classroom should recognise the relevance of vocabulary instruction in order for learners to help develop their receptive vocabulary to productive vocabulary.

1.4- Approaches to vocabulary instruction

Providing vocabulary instruction is one of the most significant ways in which teachers can improve students' reading and listening comprehension and speaking fluency and can be one of the most challenging that a teacher can do well. Thus, what students learn depends not only on what they are taught but it depends also on how they are taught according to students' developmental level, and their interests and experiences (Curtis & Longo, 2001). This belief requires that much closer attention should be paid to the methods chosen for vocabulary instruction.

Furthermore, Glickman (1991) cited by the Saskatchewan Education states: "Effective instruction is not a set of generic practices, but instead is a set of context-driven decisions about instruction. Effective teachers do not use the same set of practices for every lesson..."

Instead, what effective teachers do is constantly reflect about their work, observe whether students are learning or not, and then adjust their practice accordingly” (page 6).

This means that there are many variables to consider when making decisions about the process of instruction and learning and the method choice can be used by teachers to create learning environments and to specify the nature of the activity in which teachers and learners will be involved during the lesson. Thus, the teacher has to reflect about effective and interesting strategies to teach vocabulary so that teaching creates learning environments.

Likewise, vocabulary instruction should involve many opportunities for learners to use new words, to discuss words, and to compare new words with previously learned words (Curtis & Longo, 2001). In recent years, researchers and teachers have had a better understanding concerning the relevant role played by vocabulary knowledge in a language. They have been paying attention to successful ways to instruct and increase the vocabulary knowledge whereas effective vocabulary instruction is important for effective learning. This is to say that effective vocabulary learning depends on the way vocabulary is presented.

In short, students need vocabulary instruction that will help them acquire new word knowledge and develop strategies to enable them to increase the depth of that knowledge over time. And to achieve these goals research states that there are three main approaches in which vocabulary can be presented: explicit/direct vocabulary instruction, implicit/indirect vocabulary and independent vocabulary instruction.

1.4.1- Explicit vocabulary instruction

Many authors suggest that explicit vocabulary instruction is deductive. Like Swerling (2006), Curtis & Longo (2001) argue that in explicit vocabulary instruction the meaning of words is presented directly and then they can be illustrated with examples or using visual aids. Students benefit from explicit vocabulary instruction through the use of context to determine word meanings, as well as from opportunities to see and hear how words tend to be used. Additionally, according to Blachowicz (2005) explicit vocabulary should use definitional information and contextual information about word meanings. Therefore, the explicit vocabulary instruction is effective for providing information or developing step-by-step skills.

Explicit vocabulary instruction is a highly effective approach to teach vocabulary, that is, it is a crucial approach to be applied by the teacher for the retention of new words. National Reading Panel (2000) argues that explicit instruction of vocabulary is highly effective and it justifies this fact stating that to develop vocabulary intentionally students should be explicitly taught. And seeing vocabulary in rich contexts provided by authentic use of visual aids, rather than in isolated vocabulary drills, produces robust vocabulary learning. The use of visual aids gets students actively engaged in using and thinking about word meanings and in creating relationships among words.

Several theories address the importance of visual aids as a powerful tool to teach vocabulary explicitly. The Multiple Intelligence Theory categorizes different types of intelligence. One of the multiple intelligence categories is visual – spatial intelligence. According to this theory students with strong visual-spatial intelligence are typically very good at visualizing and mentally manipulating objects. They have a strong visual memory and they have often artistically inclination (Gardner, 1983). Those with visual-spatial intelligence also generally have a very good sense of direction and may also have very good hand-eye coordination, that is, those students think in pictures and images. Students demonstrate spatial – visual intelligence in which they are able to observe, and form mental images. This means that those students who are intelligent in visualizing pictures learn vocabulary faster and effectively. For this kind of students the use of visual aids is the most appropriate technique to teach vocabulary. For those students who are not so good in visualizing pictures they can hear the words said by the teacher. Thus, when a teacher teaches vocabulary using visual aids he/she communicates to both kinds of students.

Additionally, in 1989, Sless presented the concept of the Thinking Eye. According to this concept “the eye is not biologically separated from the brain”. It still argues that “it is part of the same organ and the brain is a part of the eye” (Canning-Wilson, 1999). This means that the fact of the eye is not biologically separated from the brain demonstrates that when students visualize the visual aids, it will help them to retain with success the meaning of words faster and improve learning by associating the vocabulary with the visual aids. The student can easily connect the vocabulary and its visual representation. Therefore, the student does not waste time trying to learn it. This concept says nothing about the connection between the brain and the ears. For example, when a student hears the vocabulary the information takes longer to reach the brain as where the information learned through seeing will reach the

brain directly and not have to travel as far. The teacher will not have to teach the vocabulary many times to reach the goal of the student learning the vocabulary. Thus, when vocabulary is taught with visual aids students usually feel more convinced that they learned what the teacher was teaching them because the message is transmitted more efficiently. So, teachers will feel more confident about teaching vocabulary to the class.

Moreover, the Fleming System of Classification suggests that students systematically recognize pictures. It also suggests the learner will analyze the visual image and then attempt to separate or identify parts or compare the components of the illustration. Next, the learner will combine components, formulate new relationships and generalize information. Then, the learner will then apply the visual to the situation. (Canning-Wilson, 1999). This means that visual aids are meaningful and can supplement curriculum that helps students associate words with the objects they see in their daily life and make the task appear more authentic. Visual aids help make the situation more real and in turn help the learner use appropriate associated language. For the teacher, the use of visual aids makes teaching easier for him/her because they will not have to spend as much time explaining where exactly the words come from.

This view is also supported by Canning (1999) that suggests the existence of different capabilities in two hemispheres of the brain. Thus, vocabulary learning will be facilitated when the two sides of the brain work together. The right side is more creative and visually imaginative and the left side is more verbally oriented. This means that the right and left sides of the brain join and this improves learning by associating the vocabulary (in the left side) with the visual aid (in the right side).

Therefore, the use of visual aids is definitely one of the most effective techniques to teach vocabulary. As the old saying says “a picture is worth a thousand words”, students should be able to retain word meanings more easily from an image. Having teachers say a word and pointing to the visual representation is useful to teach vocabulary and most of the time teachers succeed and students succeed as well. According to Crandall (2005) visual aids can be effective if appropriately chosen. So, the teacher should take into account a set of criteria to select visual aids in order to teach what they intend to. The next section will discuss the main criteria that the teacher should take into account when using visual aids to teach vocabulary.

1.4.1.1 The criteria for visual aids

The quality of the visual aids is essential to determine the effectiveness of the class, so the visual aids used in the classroom need to be carefully chosen so that they invite interaction and creative response (Crandall, 2005). Thus, the next step is intended to provide some relevant criteria considered when selecting visual aids.

Some authors argue that the teacher should take into account several concerns when designing visual aids to teach vocabulary. First, according to Willis (1990) the teacher should be familiar with the kind of visual aids to be used. This is to say that the teacher should feel comfortable with the visual aid to be used. The ability of the teacher in using the visual aid will influence the effectiveness of the class. For example, if the teacher has trouble in using a given visual aid to be used in class, it will be very difficult for the teacher to achieve what he/she is intending to. So, the teacher has to make sure how to operate both the visual aid and the equipment required using it and the teacher should practice using the visual aid before using it in the classroom.

Second, Canning-Wilson (1999) states that the teacher must be aware of the visibility of the visual aids. That is, visual aids should be large enough for the students in the very back of the classroom to see clearly. That does not mean that a photograph or chart in a textbook cannot be used. It does mean that visual aids have to be large enough to be seen, because visual aids have no value in the learning process if they cannot be seen. All lettering and illustrations must be large enough to be seen easily by the students farthest from the visual aids. Also, visibility refers to duration, or the length of the time the visual aid is used. Using a visual aid for one or two seconds will probably not give the students enough time to and understand its content. The more complex the visual aid is the longer students will need to understand and assimilate it into the teacher's message. So, the visual aid should be as simple as possible and visible to the entire class.

Third, according to Bailey, Schaffer and L. (1994) the effectiveness of the visual aid is also related to clarity. That is, the visual aid must be designed and used so that students immediately understand what it means and how it is related to the vocabulary. It is not necessary for the teacher to give students a great deal of explanation for them to understand the visual aid. For example, if the teacher wants to teach the vocabulary "cow" the visual aid

should be clear enough to teach the vocabulary “Cow” which is the teacher’s intention. Thus, the visual aid must be understood by itself and require a minimum of explanation.

Fourth, another criterion for visual aids is professionalism. That is, the visual aid must appear to be professionally prepared. Visual aids that are hand lettered, sloppy and dirty or that have misspelled words will decrease the teacher’s credibility. So, visual aids must appear that they were prepared by a professional. Also, the writing used in the visual aid should be legible in the way every student can see it. The objectives or the effectiveness of a class will be achieved only if the teacher takes into account the considerations above.

In short, visual aids should be carefully designed to achieve the goals they intend to. Because the use of visual aids is helpful only if they match the features mentioned above. Given the importance of using visual aids to teach vocabulary, teachers should give a special attention to how they can be properly used in order to help learners retain as much information as possible about the depth of words and they should provide students an opportunity to recognise words.

1.4.2 - Implicit vocabulary instruction

Some authors argue that implicit vocabulary instruction is inductive. According to Swerling (2006) implicit vocabulary instruction encourages deducing word meanings from context, by engaging in oral language experiences at home and at school, or while reading books. Vocabulary growth occurs naturally when students read and listen to each other on a daily basis. That is, students internalize the word meanings in contexts, but incidentally. Additionally, Hunt & Beglar, (1998) suggest that implicit vocabulary instruction is mainly student – centered. This is to say that implicit vocabulary teaching seeks a high level of student involvement in observing, investigating, that is, it takes advantage of student’s interest and curiosity, creativity and the development of interpersonal skills.

However, many authors present some concerns about implicit vocabulary instruction. Channel (1988) states that the learning of vocabulary implicitly is probably considered more efficient in intermediate and advanced students through extensive reading and listening since they are the most likely to have a powerful vocabulary knowledge when compared to beginner English students. This is to say that students can deduce word meanings from context only if they know a large number of word meanings used by the speaker or the writer. This means that this

strategy cannot be suitable for beginner English students since they still do not have a large number of word meanings in order to be able to deduce unknown word meanings in a text or while listening to the teacher or to someone else. In addition, to guess successfully from context students have to know about 18 words of all 20 words in a text (Hunt & Beglar, 1998), which requires the knowledge of the most common or high frequency words in a language. Therefore, implicit vocabulary instruction used by the teacher can be effective depending on the level of the students' vocabulary knowledge.

All things considered, the above paragraph suggests that low level readers often lack adequate vocabulary to get meaning from what they read. Consequently, reading is very difficult for low level readers, and they are unable to do the large amount of reading they must do. This situation contributes to what is called "Mathew Effects" (Texas Education Agency, 2004). In other words, interactions with the environment exaggerate individual differences over time, with "rich get richer", "poor get poorer" consequences. That is, good readers read more and they become even better readers and learn more about words, low level readers read less and they become poorer readers and learn fewer words. So, language teachers need to opt for more successful strategies to teach vocabulary in the way that every student has opportunity to learn vocabulary in the classroom.

In short, in indirect instruction, the teacher's role is seen as a facilitator, supporter, and resource person (Martin, 1983). The teacher arranges the learning environment, provides opportunity for student involvement, and when appropriate, provides feedback to students.

1.4.3- Independent vocabulary instruction

Independent vocabulary instruction refers to instructing learners how to be independent vocabulary learners. According to Oxford (1990) learners can understand a lot of words through systematic guessing and through the use of a dictionary. One relevant strategy to listening and reading success involve the use of contextual clues. Contextual clues are the reasons for many correct guesses about the meaning of written passages. Suffixes and prefixes are useful contextual clues to foster word meanings (Oxford, 1990). For example, teachers teach learners that the prefix "un" is the opposite of the word that it follows. So, when learners read or hear the word "unhappy" they should be able to draw that unhappy is the

opposite of the word happy. Similarly, teachers can teach that the suffix “ment” makes that word a noun. For example, if learners know that the word “to improve” is a verb and when they read or hear the word “improvement” learners should be able to conclude that the word improvement is a noun and get the meaning of the mentioned word by themselves. Further, teachers must help learners develop strategies for independent word learning and support them in becoming aware of when and how to implement these strategies in self-selected situations.

However, the use of dictionaries can be complex and difficult tasks to achieve vocabulary knowledge. The use of dictionaries may not result in gaining a full understanding of word meanings. According to Gewehr (1998) dictionaries do not always meet the requirements of language learners as users. In addition, like Diamond (1996), the Texas Education Agency (2002) state that to help students develop strong vocabulary knowledge requires more than having them look up words in a dictionary. Rather, students need instruction that will help them acquire new word knowledge and develop strategies to enable them to increase the depth of that knowledge over time.

This is not to say, however, that dictionaries are not important aids to word learning. Later, the same Agency argues that the more students are exposed to dictionaries definitions or translations, the better they will be at word learning (Texas Education Agency, 2004) and many dictionaries offer word meanings exemplifying typical usage, pronunciation and relationships with other words and other dictionaries may even expand the amount of information included.

The crucial point here is that students receive instruction in how to use what they find in dictionaries or how they can most effectively take information from them, so that they are able to define words or translate the targeted words into students’ first or second languages. Most of the time students do not receive the kind of instruction they need to learn how to use dictionaries effectively. Thus, dictionaries awareness implies, on the one hand, knowing that dictionaries are important and useful, and on the other hand, it implies knowing how to use them. Learner training in the effective use of dictionaries gives students a valuable skill that will enable learners to use dictionaries in and out of the classroom. As French Allen perceives them, dictionaries are "passports to independence," and using them is one of the student-centred learning activities (1983).

In short, according to independent vocabulary instruction the teacher can encourage and facilitate vocabulary learning by helping learners learn strategies for determining the meaning of words independently. That is, teachers should instruct students to help them build their vocabulary and develop strategies to learn vocabulary on their own.

1.5 Other considerations in vocabulary instruction

Along with the vocabulary instruction approaches mentioned above, there are other relevant considerations that can be taken into account when teaching vocabulary. The important considerations that are discussed below are not considered approaches, but they can be helpful for the effectiveness of vocabulary instructions.

1.5.1 Sense relations

In language learning and teaching, sense relations are of paramount importance. Thus, there are several aspects of lexis that need to be taken into account when teaching vocabulary. These important aspects are polysemy, denotation, synonymy and antonymy.

First, denotation also called hyponymy refers to the category a word belongs to (DeCarrico, 1992). For example, when teaching the vocabulary “apple” students have to know that apple is a fruit. In the same way “dog”, “cat”, “cow” are animals.

Second, polysemy refers to the different meanings that the same word may have in different contexts or the different denotations. (Barra, 2005). Additionally, Redman and Gairns (1986) use the term polysemy to describe a single word form with several different that can have closely related meanings. For example, in English, people talk about the “head” of a pin, the head of a person or the head of an organisation. To solve this problem of polysemy students need to see the appropriate representation of words and practice the word meanings in context, since context allows students understand the meaning of words.

Third, synonymy is described by Mora (2001) as being a tool particularly useful to teach words that have multiple meanings. That is, synonymy is successful to convey the meaning of words using other words that have the same meaning. Synonyms are especially useful in helping define adjectives and adverbs, such as big and tall or badly and poorly.

The last but not the least concept is antonymy. Mora (2001) states that antonymy is a powerful strategy to convey word meanings through the use of other words that have opposite meanings.

The implication of the aspects just mentioned in teaching is that the goals of vocabulary instruction must be more than simply covering a certain number of words on a word list. Teachers or course books must use techniques that can help realise this global concept of what it means to know a lexical item. Teachers must also go beyond that, teachers must give learners opportunities to use the items learnt.

Research also suggests that our 'mental lexicon' is highly organised and efficient, and that semantic related items are stored together. Teachers can use this information to attempt to facilitate the learning process, by grouping items of vocabulary in semantic fields, such as topics.

In short, it is beneficial to provide direct instruction for words that are semantically related. The aspects above are extremely valuable and can provide a useful framework for the learner to understand semantic boundaries and they can provide greater precision in guiding learners towards word meanings and Powell (1986) as cited by Blachowicz (2005) argues that these relevant semantic relationships are powerful tools in vocabulary instruction.

Another factor that should warrant careful consideration when planning vocabulary instruction is which words should be taught. Foreign language learners need to know large numbers of words to speak that language fluently. Thus, when teachers and course books plan the vocabulary goals of a course study they can look at two kinds of information that can help them to decide how much vocabulary a non-native English speaker needs to speak English fluently. This fact has to do with high frequency vocabulary and low frequency vocabulary. The section below is intended to provide a brief overview about these two issues on vocabulary instructions.

1.5.2- Frequency of words

In this section, frequency of words, a very important distinction has been made between high frequency words and low frequency words. This distinction is very important because teachers need to deal with these two types of words and teachers and students need to ensure that high frequency words are well known. It is therefore important that teachers and course books have clear sensible goals for vocabulary instruction so it is very important to know where students are in their vocabulary growth. This means that teachers or course books should have criteria to judge whether a particular word deserves attention or not.

Thus, some authors argue that there are a group of words in English that occur very frequently and if a learner knows these words, that learner will know a very large proportion of the running words in a written text or in a conversation. According to Schmith and McCarthy (1997) although a language makes use of a large number of words, not all of these words are useful. According to them one measure of usefulness is word frequency, that is, how often the word occurs in normal use of a language. From the point of view of word frequency “*the*” is a very useful word in English and so a high frequency word. In the same way, *at, on, in, for, of, a* and so on are also considered high frequency words. They occur so frequently that about 7 % of words in a page of written English text and the same proportion of the words in a conversation are repetitions of the word *the, at, on, for, of a*. So, this small group of high frequency words is important in English language because these words cover a very large proportion of words in spoken and written texts. So, teachers and students should spend considerable time on them and thinking about successful strategies to teach them.

Still, Nation (2001) states that a non-native English speaker needs to know 3,000 or so high frequency words of the English language. According to him, this is an immediate high priority and there is little sense in focusing on other vocabulary until these are well learned. The next focus for the teacher is on helping learners develop strategies to increase their vocabulary size and learn low frequency words of the English language. Therefore, teachers or course books should firstly focus on high frequency words that students are most likely to find in a written text or in a conversation instead of teaching words that are less useful in a language.

In contrast to high frequency words, there are other words that are less frequent in English. Low frequency words are a large group of words that occur infrequently in a spoken and

written text and include all words that are not high frequency words. According to Nation and Kennedy (1994) low frequency words consist of technical words, proper names and words that students rarely meet in their use of English language. Also, Nation (2001), among others, argue that some low frequency words are simply low frequency words. This is to say that there are words that almost every language user rarely uses, for example, the word “plummet.” Although it is very important to know large number of word meanings students do not need this word to communicate to each other.

In short, teachers should start teaching first high frequency words that are words most likely to be found in a language instead of low frequency words that are less frequent in a language. For example, teachers should give much attention to words such as *the*, *at*, *for*, *in* and so on instead of giving attention to words like *plummet*, *cow*, *horse* and so on. And teachers should pay attention to effective strategies to present high frequency words to students.

Conclusions

What are the characteristics of effective vocabulary instruction?

Based on the information of the literature review, an effective vocabulary curriculum should include the following features: first, an effective vocabulary curriculum should include explicit vocabulary instruction including reliance on visual aids, definitional information, and contextual information. Explicit vocabulary instruction can contribute to achieving the goals of developing vocabulary breadth, elaborating vocabulary and building fluency of a language. One of the most addressed techniques in explicit vocabulary instruction is the use of visual aids. According to several theories most of the learners retain faster a large amount of vocabulary when presented orally and visually because visual aids help learners associate the words that are being taught with the visual aids. In addition, the use of visual aids will be useful only if they are visible, clear, simple and professionally designed.

Second, an effective vocabulary curriculum should also include references to independent vocabulary instruction including instruction of how to teach learners to learn independently through dictionaries use and contextual clues that are related to prefixes and suffixes and cognates. The knowledge of meanings of common affixes may help students generate the meanings of new words that they encounter.

Third, an effective vocabulary curriculum should include reference to relationships between words that are related to denotation, polysemy, synonymy and antonymy. The process of categorization is a way of ordering and organizing concepts. Research concludes that a part of vocabulary instruction is done through associations of words with other words. This process needs to be strengthened through careful use of categorization. Such a consideration should be systematic in terms of grouping words for instruction.

Finally, an effective vocabulary curriculum should include instruction of high frequency words in a language. Teachers should teach first high frequency words in a language because learners may understand a text or a conversation only if they get the knowledge of high frequency words. High frequency words are more likely to encounter while reading or listening to a conversation. Therefore, the knowledge of high frequency words makes a

student a faster and more fluent reader. Therefore, teachers and course books should concentrate first on instruction of high frequency words of a language.

Chapter II

Method

2. Data collection

Based on what researchers say about effective vocabulary instruction I will do a comparison of that and what the course book *Eyes and Spies* suggests as being effective instruction to teach vocabulary. Based on the criteria researchers consider as being one of the most important aspects when selecting words to teach, these being the high frequency words, I will compare those words to what the course book “*Eyes and Spies*” considers as being the most important words for students. From the evidence that I will gather through my research, I will be able to determine if the course book *eyes and spies* determined by the Ministry of Education suggests effective ways to teach English vocabulary.

To achieve my goals I will follow the following steps: first, I will identify all the vocabulary items in the course book based on the criteria for vocabulary selection on page 34. Vocabulary items that are used repeatedly throughout the course book only will be counted once. For example, the word “elephant” is used twice, but I will count it as one vocabulary item. Then, I will examine what methods the course book suggests to teach the words selected taking into account the results of the literature review related to effective vocabulary instruction.

Second, I will examine how many words are taught by highlighting the relationships among them. The next step will be to examine how many words are the most common English words or high frequency words. I will use only the one hundred (100) most common English words because research shows that students in their first year of learning a foreign language do not retain much more than one hundred words. Fourth, I will present the results and data analysis and conclusions of my findings. According to the conclusions I will write the recommendation’s section.

I chose to work on the 1st cycle because it is where students generally have their first exposure to a foreign language and they have a desire to learn a new language. Also, they expect that they will be able to learn a large amount of vocabulary knowledge in order to communicate successfully. So, English course books should provide a set of effective techniques to teach English and vocabulary specifically to meet the students' expectation. Another reason I chose the course book "Eyes and Spies" is because it is the current one used in the 1st cycle suggested by the Ministry of Education as the appropriate course book for students beginning their first year of English instruction.

2.1. The course book

Eyes and Spies is an English course book for English learners who are studying English for the first time. It is the newly adopted course book for the first level by the Ministry of Education. Eyes and Spies was meant for fifth year level one, but it is used for seventh grade. It is divided in 9 units that are divided in several lessons. At the beginning of each unit there is a page that presents the objectives of each lesson. At the end of each unit there are two project works that can be used as example for other new project works that can be developed by students. Additionally, there is a page about cultural information in which students have an active knowledge about important aspects of British culture. It emphasizes that the learning of the English language is also about learning important aspects of those countries that speak English as first language; however, it only presents cultural information about England.

Eyes and Spies includes a variety of activities, including games and songs in order to motivate students to communicate in English. It focuses on four macro skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. It also includes a student's book, a teacher's book, an activity book and auxiliary items. The teacher's book provides information and suggestions about the exercises in the course book and in the activity book with the solutions and some texts to be used in the listening activities. It includes additional activities as well that can be followed or adapted by the teacher according to the learners' needs.

The activity book is an auxiliary book that allows learners to acquire and increase their vocabulary in an easy and motivated way. It is structured according to the topics that are part of the contents. It is also intended to be used at school and at home as well. It has 80 pages

including a variety of activities. At the beginning of each lesson there is a grammatical page in the Portuguese language in which students might recycle the contents learnt at school in order to develop their knowledge and be more confident. It includes also a picture dictionary. However, the activity book and the teachers' book are not well circulated.

2.2 Problems in selecting criteria

There is a lack of mention of what the course book *Eyes and Spies* perceives as vocabulary items. Additionally, there is also a lack of mention of the methods the course book uses to teach the vocabulary items it suggests to. Therefore, I have to select my own criteria for vocabulary based on what I perceive as vocabulary.

2.3 Selecting criteria

To achieve my goals the data collection will be based on the following criteria to select the vocabulary items.

I will select the vocabulary items basing on the following criteria.

- Words or expressions that are a carrier of meaning;
- Can be single words or expressions when the single word alone does not convey meaning.
- The words that are listed in the table of contents under vocabulary section.

2.3.1 Explicit vocabulary instruction

For explicit vocabulary instruction there are three different techniques:

- Visual aids – I will consider words taught through visual aids those words that the course book “*Eyes and Spies*” presents anything visual that helps students understand the meaning of those words. Visual aids that are large enough that can be seen from the back of the classroom will be considered as visible. Those visual aids that learners can see immediately what it is intended to teach will be considered visual aids that meet the criteria of visibility and simplicity.
- Definitional – I will consider words taught through definitional technique those words that *Eyes and Spies* presents a brief and simple definition about them.

- Contextual – I will consider words taught through meaningful contexts those words that are used in the texts or dialogues.

2.3.2 Independent vocabulary instruction

For independent vocabulary instruction I will see where Eyes and Spies instructs learners how to learn independently, that is, where it teaches learners strategies for determining word meanings. These strategies include instruction of how to use a dictionary effectively or the use of dictionary to find out the meaning of a word. For example, I will consider as independent vocabulary instruction those words that Eyes and Spies suggest that the use of a dictionary to find out their meanings. These strategies also include contextual clues that have to do with suffix, prefix and cognates. For example, I will also consider words that Eyes and Spies gives clues using prefix and suffix of words to find out their meanings. I will consider cognates the words that are similar to Portuguese Language and students can easily determine the meaning of those words. For example, I will consider the vocabulary Italy as a cognate because it is similar to Portuguese language.

2.3.3 Relationship between words

Vocabulary can be taught through the following four important tools:

- Denotation – I will consider as denotation the words that belong to the same category according to each lesson or topic. For example, the second topic of the first unit is about cardinal numbers. I will see if all vocabulary items suggested in that lesson are only cardinal numbers or if there are other words that do not have the same denotation, that is, if there are words that are not cardinal numbers.
- Polysemy – I will consider polysemy the words that Eyes and Spies presents more than one meaning according to different contexts.
- Synonymy – I will consider synonym the words that Eyes and Spies teaches using other words that have the same meaning. For example, I will consider the word “hello” as a synonym of “hi”.
- Antonymy – I will consider antonym the words that Eyes and Spies teaches using their opposite meanings. For example, I will consider the word “thin” as being the antonymy of “fat”.

2.3.4 High frequency words

Concerning high frequency words, I will refer to high frequency words as words or parts of expressions that include words considered as the most common English words. For example, when looking for high frequency words I will not determine the vocabulary item sit down as a high frequency word together, but I will examine sit and down separately. Additionally, I will consider high frequency words those words that belong to the 100 high frequency word list even if Eyes and Spies uses their short form. For example, the vocabulary “is” is one of the one hundred high frequency words and most of the time the course book uses its short form.

In addition, some verbs are considered as high frequency words. However, not all of the verb tenses are high frequency words. Therefore, I will consider as high frequency words only those verb tenses that are included in the list of the one hundred high frequency words because not all of the verb tenses are high frequency words. For example, although the word get is a high frequency word I will not consider the word got as a high frequency word because it not used as commonly as the word get.

2.4 Creation of instrument

Based on the results of the literature review, an effective vocabulary curriculum should include:

- Explicit vocabulary instruction including reliance on visual aids, definitional information, and contextual information.
- Visual aids that are simple, visible and clear.
- Reference to independent vocabulary instruction that instructs learners how to become independent learners using dictionary, contextual clues that are related to prefixes and suffixes and cognates.
- Reference to relationships between words that are related to denotation, polysemy, synonymy and antonymy.
- Suggest the most common words in a language

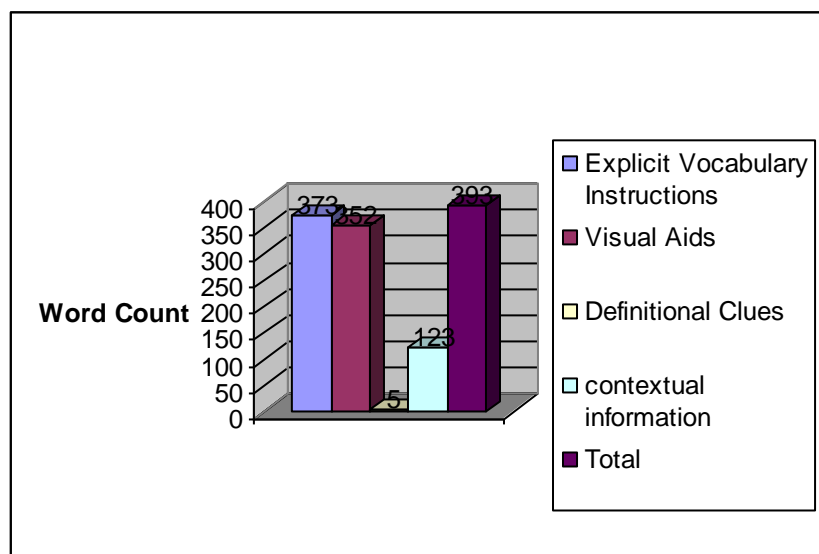
2.5 Results

The course book *Eyes and Spies* suggests 393 vocabulary items distributed in 19 units to be taught in the seventh grade.

2.5.1 – Explicit vocabulary instruction

From the 393 words, 373 vocabulary items are taught explicitly, that represents 94, 9%. It means that only 20 vocabulary items are not taught explicitly. This means that the course book *Eyes and Spies* primarily uses explicit vocabulary instruction, one of the approaches proven to be the most effective. The results are illustrated below.

Table 1: Explicit vocabulary instruction



From the 373 words taught explicitly, 352 vocabulary items are taught through visual aids, in which represents 95, 1 % of the total of words taught. This result shows that most of the words are taught through the use of visual aids and this fact reinforces the idea that the use of visual aids is a powerful technique to teach vocabulary explicitly.

From the words 352 words, 100% met the criteria for simplicity, 100% met the criteria for visibility and only 5 visual aids which represents 98, 5% did not meet the criteria for clarity. We can conclude that the vast majority of the visual aids met the criteria for visual aids as stated in the literature review.

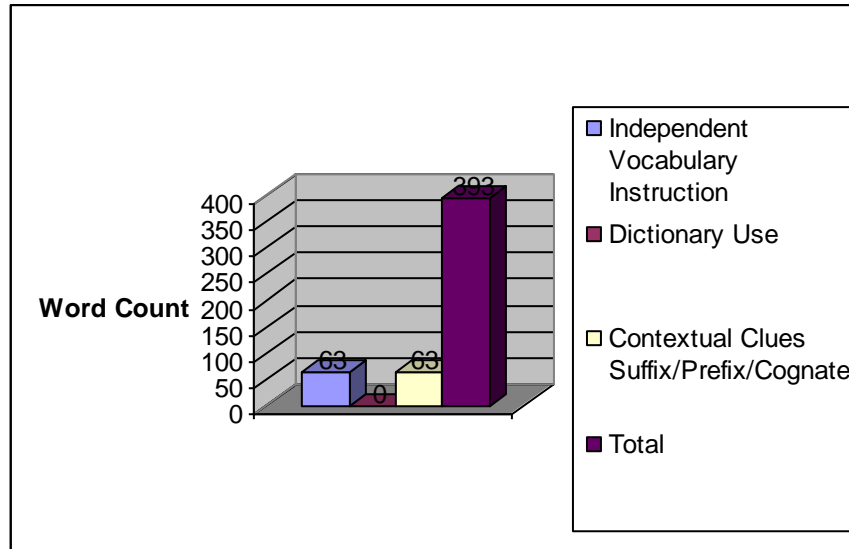
Eyes and Spies does not suggest any vocabulary items to be taught through definitional clues. It is the only type of explicit vocabulary instruction under represented in the course book with 0 %. It means that the course book highlights only the use of visual aids and contextual information to teach the vocabulary items explicitly.

Related to contextual information, Eyes and Spies teaches only 123 vocabulary items using context which represents only 33, 2 % of the total. The course book uses visual aids and contextual clues simultaneously, that is, 88 vocabulary items are taught through visual aids and at the same time Eyes and Spies provides contextual clues of the same words through dialogues and texts to reinforce the word meanings and in what situations those words should be used.

2.5.2 – independent vocabulary instruction

In terms of independent vocabulary instruction, from the total of the vocabulary items (393) only 63 words that represent 17 % use cognates of the Portuguese language. This means that cognate use is the only technique that Eyes and Spies suggests helping learners learn words independently. Although we cannot say if this was an intentional vocabulary instruction technique, we can infer that the text's Portuguese writers and publishers were aware of the similarities between some of the vocabulary in English and Portuguese.

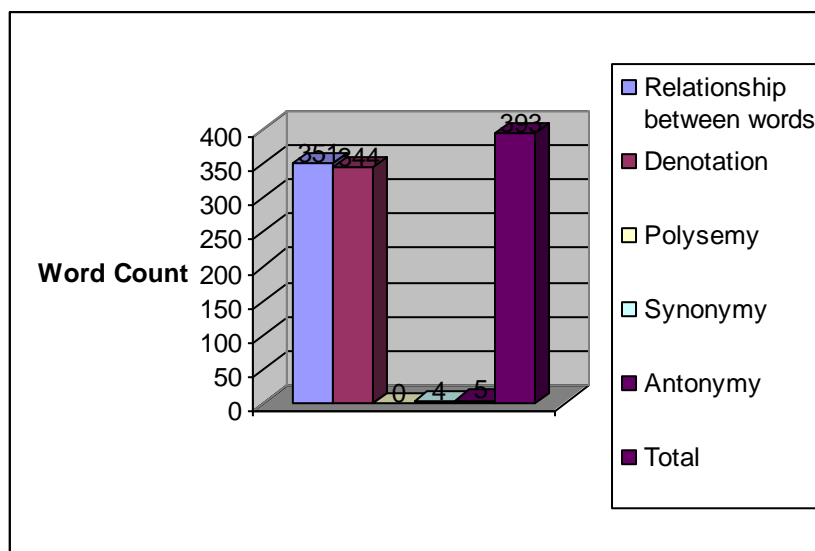
Also, the course book Eyes and Spies does not suggest the dictionary use as a way of helping learners become independent. The course book contradicts itself because it states that one of the objectives of the course book is to provide strategies that can be helpful for the independence of learners in their learning process. However, there is a lack of strategies that can help learners determine word meanings by themselves. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 3: Independent vocabulary instruction

Eyes and Eyes does not focus on strategies to help learners learn through suffix and prefix knowledge. It is important to state that most of the vocabulary items in the course can not be added suffix and prefix in the way they make sense. Helping learners how to learn vocabulary through dictionary use is under represented in the course book Eyes and Spies. This means that there is a lack of instruction of how learners determine word meanings by themselves.

2.5.3 Relationship between words

From the 393 words, an amount of 351 vocabulary items or 94, 9 % of the words are related to each other. Thus, there are 344 words that have the same denotation and represent a percentage of 93 %. This means that most of the words in the course book are organised according to the vocabulary topic indicated in the table of contents. However, Eyes and Spies uses synonyms of only 4 words that represents 1, 1 % of the total and it uses antonymy of only 5 words that represents 1,4 %.

Table 4: Relationship between words

It is important to emphasize that most of the vocabulary items in this course do not have synonyms or antonyms. For example, there is no synonym or antonym for the vocabulary pen, pencil and so on. It is also important to emphasize that most of the words do not have different meanings in different contexts. This explains the reason why there are not any vocabulary items with two different meanings in the course book.

2.5. 4 – High frequency words

Finally, the course book uses high frequency words 102 times, although some of those words are repeated. It uses 47 different high frequency words in English from the 100 high frequency words selected. This number represents only 47 % of the total. This means that less than half of the one hundred high frequency words are used in the course book. All of the high frequency words used in the course book is taught implicitly except the words water, number, one, two, first and time. That is, they are presented in context and/or with visual aids. What calls my attention is the fact that the common word “of” is used few times and it is the second most common English word. Although the course book provides learners with high exposure to high frequency words, it should pay more attention to the most common words such as “of”.

Conclusions

Research question 2 – What are the characteristics of vocabulary instruction used in the course book *Eyes and Spies*?

The course book *Eyes and Spies* performs well in terms of teaching vocabulary explicitly, because a high percentage of the vocabulary items in the course book *Eyes and Spies* are taught explicitly. This fact reinforces the idea of the National Reading Panel (2000) that considers explicit vocabulary instruction a crucial approach to be applied for the retention of a large amount of word meanings. Explicit vocabulary instruction is one of the most successful instructions for teaching vocabulary especially for beginners. Therefore, the course book is extremely useful for beginners.

The course book has a high percentage of use of visual aids. Paraphrasing Allen (1983), visual aids are powerful and they are extensively used for conveying meaning and are particularly useful for teaching concrete items of vocabulary. They often led themselves easily to practice activities involving student interaction. This view is supported by the fact that the course book *Eyes and Spies* is very colourful and uses a high percentage of visual aids. Visual aids help learners learn better because they learn more words visually instead of hearing the words. Learners will remember better if the material has been presented by means of visual aids. They help learners associate presented material in a meaningful way and incorporate it into their system of language values.

Most of visual aids used in the course book *Eyes and Spies* appears to fill the criteria of simplicity, visibility, clarity and professionalism that are the key features for effectiveness of use of visual aids to teach vocabulary. Although, there are a small number of visual aids that needs some improvement in the area of clarity, the course book is still effective in terms of use of visual aids.

Another successful technique to teach vocabulary explicitly is through the use of contextualisation. The course book presents a considerable number of words in meaningful context. Although less than half of the words are presented in context through dialogues and texts, the course book uses visual aids to teach the other words. The essence of good

vocabulary instruction is the creation of contexts in which students constantly use relevant vocabulary in their reading, writing, and speaking.

Research also considers definitional information a helpful strategy to teach vocabulary. The fact that the course book does not use this strategy does not make this course book useless, because the course includes a high percentage of use of visual aids and the use of contextualisation which are much more powerful to teach vocabulary explicitly. Therefore, definitional information is not necessary.

Although research states that independent vocabulary instruction that is related to how to instruct learners to find out the meaning of words by themselves is a good strategy to help learners to build their vocabulary knowledge through dictionary use and knowledge of common suffixes and prefixes, the course book *Eyes and Spies* provides few words that can be helpful for learners to develop their thinking ability. The course book only focuses on the use of cognates, although the percentage of use of cognates is very small. Taking into account the vocabulary items selected in the course book to be taught I have to state that the course book has few opportunities to teach those vocabulary items through the knowledge of suffixes or prefixes. Additionally, the course book does not provide access to a dictionary, or teach learners how to use a dictionary.

As stated in the literature review section, the aspects of polysemy, synonymy and antonymy are considered by Mora (2001) as powerful tools to teach vocabulary. Although these aspects are under represented in the course book *Eyes and Spies* it does not mean that this fact affects the usefulness of the course book because most of the vocabulary items do not have synonyms, antonyms or even polysemy. For example, there are no synonyms or antonyms for the topics cardinal numbers, days of the week, wild animals and so on.

In addition, another aspect considered also important by DeCarrico (1992) is related to denotation. It is very important that teachers select words to teach in a systematic way according to the different subjects. The course book did a great job doing this because of the strong link between related topics that is demonstrated by the high percentage of the use of denotation. For example, younger learners would not learn the words bed, potato, table, chair, carrot, cabbage, couch, and beans on the same day, but would focus on vegetables for one day and furniture on another, building knowledge about a category along with the new words.

Therefore, when learners are taught vocabulary by category, learners are able to more easily see and learn the connections between them.

Finally, when selecting vocabulary words to teach, teachers have to pay attention to high frequency words that are the words most likely to encounter when reading a book or listening in a conversation. The result of the primary research reinforces the importance of knowing the high frequency words. If learners have the knowledge of the high frequency words they will be able to understand words or even guessing meaning words when reading a passage in a text or when listening to other people. The percentage of the high frequency words used in the course book is significant reinforcing what it was said above. Most of the high frequency words are extremely hard to teach explicitly through the use of visual aids. In addition, Nation (1998) suggests that most of the high frequency words alone do not carry much meaning they do affect the meaning of a sentence and help make it understandable. This fact is explained by the fact that all the high frequency words in the course book *Eyes and Spies* are taught implicitly, except the words water, one, two, first, time, numbers, which were taught through visual aids and context. Therefore, careful attention should be paid to the selection of appropriate words for systematic instruction and reinforcement.

3- Recommendations

In this section of recommendations, I do not intend to criticise the course book in terms of its weaknesses, rather I intend to make a set of recommendations that English teachers may consider when using this book to improve the quality of their English instruction. That will give teachers more freedom when using the course book *Eyes and Spies*. Most of the suggestions are based on my experience teaching during my 5th year pedagogic internship.

First, the overall impression of the course book is very positive and has colourful pictures. However, I think there are some visual aids that could be more interesting and better designed. For example, on page 51 the pictures about furniture could be clear and they do not fill one of the criteria for the effectiveness of visual aids which is related to clarity of visual aids. Taking into account that this course book is not available in Cape Verde and every learner may not have it and even if teachers ask learners to copy the pages that include the pictures, they will not be clear enough to help students to understand the meaning of those words easily. So, I suggest the visual aids in Appendix number 3 that are clearer.

Second, on page number 22 I suggest that English teachers might use a real album about their family. A real album was used to teach learners in the seventh grade about family trees and every learner really enjoyed it. That is, when the teacher showed the album to the class I could notice every single student looked immediately at it. They started making questions about it. This experience shows that when the teacher uses realia to teach vocabulary they are most likely to invite students questions and students feel more comfortable to know and ask more about them.

Third, concerning to page 92 (it is about the time) I suggest introducing the words clock and watch and the difference between them using visual aids. Teachers can not teach how to say the time without teaching learners those two concepts. The visual aids that I suggested to teach the mentioned words are in appendix number 3.

Fourth, the course book *Eyes and Spies* also presents a picture dictionary that is useful to help learners increase their knowledge. However, it is needs to be available for the learners.

Finally, the unit 3 is about jobs and buildings and it is on page 40. As the names of buildings are just written there and the course book does not suggest any technique to teach them so, I suggest writing the name of those buildings in Portuguese related to the jobs. Then it can give a simple and useful explanation of how to use the dictionary effectively and finally ask learners to look up those words in a dictionary. This way, the course book helps learners how to build their knowledge independently and whenever learners need to look up words in a dictionary they will be able to do so and also it covers the independent vocabulary instruction under represented in the course book. Teachers should teach students how to determine word meanings from context clues. I hope these recommendations will be taken into account by the English teachers for the improvement of learners' learning and teachers' teaching.

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Appendixes

Jan Brett ~ High Frequency Word List



Words 1 to 20



	the	of
and	a	to
in	is	you
that	it	he
was	for	on
are	as	with
his	they	I

Jan Brett ~ High Frequency Word List



Words 21 to 40

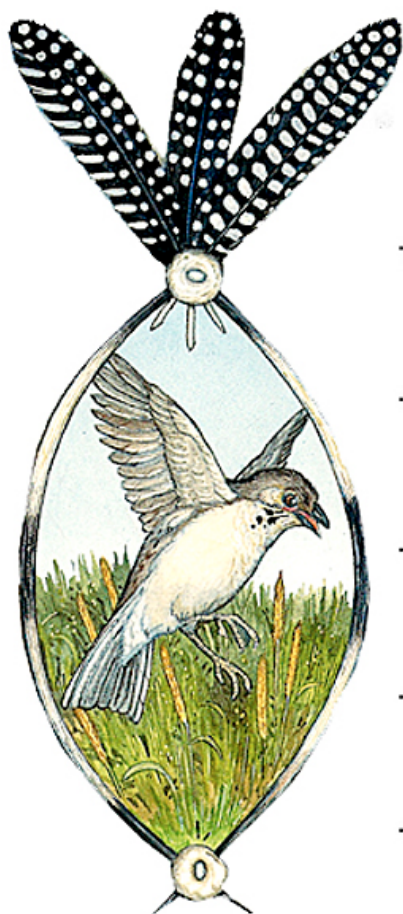



	at	be
this	have	from
or	one	had
by	word	but
not	what	all
were	we	when
your	can	said

Jan Brett ~
High Frequency Word List



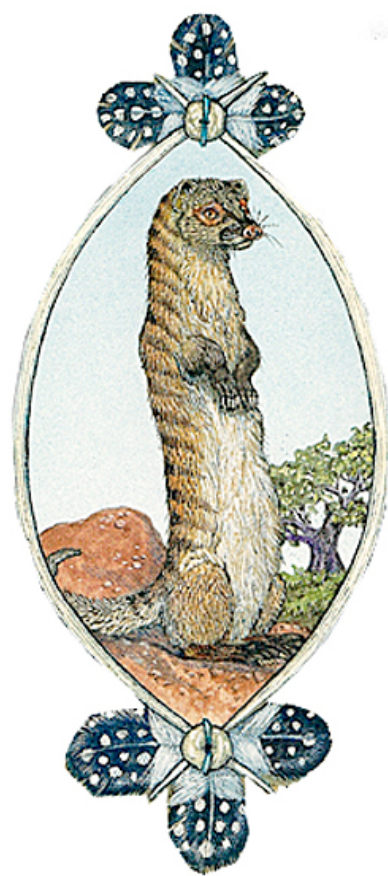
Words 41 to 60



	there	use
an	each	which
she	do	how
their	if	will
up	other	about
out	many	then
them	these	so

Jan Brett ~ High Frequency Word List

Words 61 to 80



	some	her
would	make	like
him	into	time
has	look	two
more	write	go
see	first	water
been	call	who

Jan Brett ~ High Frequency Word List



Words 81 to 100



	oil	now
find	long	down
day	did	get
come	made	may
part	over	number
no	way	could
people	my	than

List of vocabulary items selected in the course book *Eyes and Spies*

Page number 8 is about classroom English. It has 17 items.

1-Classroom English

2- Sit down

3- Stand up

4- Open your book

5 Close your book

6- Listen

7- Pay attention

8- Clean the board

9- Write

10- May I go to the board?

11- May I come in?

12- May I sharpen my pencil?

13- Sorry, I am late

14- What page

15- May I go to the toilet?

16- How do you say borracha in English?

17- Read

The unit 1 is on page 12 and it is divided in seven topics. The first topic is about names and it suggests as vocabulary the following words:

1- What's your name?

2- Hello

3- Hi

4- Welcome

5- My name is

6- This is

7- Names

The second topic of the second unit on page 16 is about cardinal numbers. There are 22 vocabulary items:

1- How old are you?

2-One

3-Two

4- Three

5- Four

6- Five

7- Six

8- Seven

9- Eight

10- Nine

11- Ten

13- Twelve

14- Thirteen

15 – Fourteen

16- Fifteen

17- sixteen

18- Seventeen

19 - Eighteen

20- Nineteen

21- Twenty

22- Cardinal numbers

12- Eleven

The third topic is on page 18 and it is about countries. There are 14 items:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 1- Where are you from? | 9-China |
| 2-Portugal | 10- Spain |
| 3-The United Kingdom | 11- Japan |
| 4-France | 12-Germany |
| 5-Italy | 13-Australia |
| 6- The United States of America | 14- Countries |
| 7- Russia | |
| 8-South Africa | |

There is another lesson about cardinal numbers on page 20 and suggests 13 vocabulary items

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1 – Is he fifty years old? | 9- Ninety |
| 2- Twenty | 10- One hundred |
| 3- Thirty | 11- Twenty one |
| 4- Forty | 12- Twenty two |
| 5- Fifty | 13- Twenty three |
| 6- Sixty | |
| 7- Seventy | |
| 8- Eighty | |

The fourth topic is about family. It is on page 22 and there are 15 items:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| 1- He isn't my brother | 8- Parents |
| 2- My funny album | 9- Sister |
| 3- Grandfather | 10- Brother |
| 4- Grandmother | 11- Aunt |
| 5- Grandparents | 12- Cousin |
| 6- Father | 13- Uncle |
| 7- Mother | 14- Me |
| | 15 - Family |

The fifth topic is about ordinal numbers. It is on page 24 and there 26 items:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1-When is your birthday? | 15- Thirteenth |
| 2- Ordinal number | 16- Fourteenth |
| 3- First | 17- Fifteenth |
| 4- Second | 18- Sixteenth |
| 5- Third | 19- Seventeenth |
| 6- Fourth | 20- Eighteenth |
| 7- Fifth | 21- Nineteenth |
| 8- Sixth | 22- Twentieth |
| 9- Seventh | 23- Twenty - first |
| 10- Eighth | 24- Twenty - second |
| 11- Ninth | 25- Twenty - third |
| 12- Tenth | 26- Twenty - fourth |
| 13- Eleventh | |
| 14- Twelfth | |

The sixth topic is on page 24. It is about months and has 13 items:

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1-January | 5-May | 9- September |
| 2-February | 6- June | 10-October |
| 3-March | 7-July | 11-November |
| 4-April | 8- August | 12-December |
| | | 13- Months |

The last topic of the second unit is on page 24. It is about days of the week and has 8 items:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| 1-Monday | 5- Friday |
| 2- Tuesday | 6- Saturday |
| 3-Wednesday | 7- Sunday |
| 4- Thursday | 8- Days of the week |

1

The unit 2 has two topics. The first topic is about colours and it is on page 30. There are 13 items:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| 1- What's your favourite colour? | | |
| 2- Red | 6 -White | 10-Grey |
| 3-Yellow | 7-Green | 11-Black |

4-Brown

8-Pink

12- Purple

5- Blue

9-Orange

13- Colour

The second topic is about school objects. It is on page 32. There are 12 items:

1- What's this?

2-Pencil case

6-Rubber

10- Bag

3-Pencil sharpener

7- Exercise book

11 - Calculator

4-Pencil

8- Book

12- School objects

5-Pen

9- Ruler

The unit number 3 is on page number 40 and has two topics. The first topic is about jobs and has 12 items:

1- What's your job?

7- Shop- assistant

2- Nurse

8- Security guard

3 -Policeman

9- Singer

4- Doctor

10- Football player

5-Actor

11 – Computer programmer

6-Teacher

12- Jobs

The second topic of the third unit is on page 43. It is about buildings and suggests 9 items:

1- Hospital

5- Theatre

2- Bank

6- Stadium

3- School

7- Office

4- Police station

8 – Shop

9- Buildings

The unit number 4 is on page 50. It is divided into two topics. The first topic is about parts of the house and furniture. There are 10 items:

1- There is a man in Mrs house

2- Kitchen

5-Garage

8- Bedroom

3- Dining room

6-Bathroom

9- Garden

4- Living room

7- Hall

10- Parts of the house

The second topic of the fourth unit is on page 50 and it is about furniture. It has 18 items:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1- Carpet | 7- Wardrobe | 13-Cupboard |
| 2- Sink | 8- Sofa | 14- Bed |
| 3- Bedside table | 9- Fridge | 15- Chair |
| 4- Toilet | 10-Washbasin | 16- Table |
| 5- Bath | 11- Mirror | 17- Piano |
| 6- Armchair | 12- Cooker | 18- Furniture |

The fifth unit is on page 62. It is divided into 3 topics. The first topic is on page 62 and it is about personal objects. It suggests 15 items.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1- We've got a special watch | | |
| 2- Basketball | 7- Guitar | 11- Bodyboard |
| 3-Camera | 8-Rollerblades | 12-Bike |
| 4-Discman | 9- Hi-fi | 13-Walkman |
| 5-Tennis racket | 10-CDs | 14- Mobile phone |
| 6-Watch | | 15- Personal objects |

The second topic is on page 66 and it is about animals' bodies. It suggests 20 vocabulary items:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 1- It's got a long tail | 9- Foot | 17- Long |
| 2- Eye | 10- Hand | 18- Fat |
| 3-Mouth | 11- Leg | 19 - Big |
| 4-Tail | 12- Tooth | 20- Body |
| 5-Arm | 13- Tall | |
| 6- Ear | 14- Small | |
| 7- Stripes | 15- Short | |
| 8- Hair | 16- Thin | |

The third topic is about animals in danger. It is on page 66/67/68 and has 17 items:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1- Animals in danger | 9- Elephant |
| 2-Tiger | 10- Sea lion |
| 3-Rhino | 11- Crocodile |
| 4-Gorilla | 12- Wings |
| 5-Whale | 13 – Whiskers |
| 6-Wolf | 14- Beak |
| 7 – Parrot | 15- Trunk |
| 8- Panda | 16- Spots |
| | 17- Animals |

The third topic is also about pets and wild animals and it is on page 70. It suggests 13 vocabulary items:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1- Have you any pets? | 9- Wild animals |
| 2- Pets | 10 - Giraffe |
| 3- Dog | 11- Snake |
| 4- Bird | 12- Zebra |
| 5-Cat | 13- Lion |
| 6- Fish | |
| 7- Hamster | |
| 8- Tortoise | |

The sixth unit is on page 79/80. It is divided into 3 topics. The first and the second topics are about food, drink and meals and have the following 26 items:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1- I like chocolate cake | 11- Ice cream | 21- I'm thirsty |
| 2-Salad | 12- Cheese | 22- I'm Hungry |
| 3- Chips | 13- Cake | 23- Orange juice |
| 4- Fish | 14- Apples | 24- Food |
| 5- Pizza | 15- Oranges | 25- Drink |
| 6- Hamburger | 16- Bananas | 26- Meals |
| 7- Steak | 17- Cola | |
| 8- Chicken | 18- Lemonade | |

- | | |
|---------|-----------|
| 9- Soup | 19- Milk |
| 10- Egg | 20- Water |

The third topic is on page 84 and it is about sports. It has 12 vocabulary items:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1- Do you like basketball? | 6-Handball | 11-Karate |
| 2-Volleyball | 7-Football | 12- Sports |
| 3-Basketball | 8-Swimming | |
| 4-Cycling | 9-Golf | |
| 5-Boxing | 10-Tennis | |

The seventh unit is on page 92 and it is divided into two topics. The first topic is on page 92 and it is about time. It suggests 8 vocabulary items:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1-What is the time, please? | |
| 2-It's five o'clock | 5- It's a quarter to six |
| 3-It's ten past four | 6-It's midday |
| 4- It's half past eight | 7- It's midnight |
| | 8- Time |

The second topic is on page 94 - 97 and it is about basic verbs of everyday actions. It suggests 22 items:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1- I always get up at 6.30 a.m | 12-Have a shower |
| 2-Go to bed | 13-Play the guitar |
| 3-Do my homework | 14-Tidy my room |
| 4- Have breakfast | 15- Read detective stories |
| 5-Play football | 16- Listen to classical music |
| 6- Get up | 17- Collect stickers |
| 7-Watch TV | 18- Have a pet |
| 8- Have dinner | 19- Play handball |
| 9-Go to school | 20- Go to cinema at weekends |
| 10- Look after my dog | 21- Basic verbs |
| 11- Have lunch | 22- Every actions |

The eighth unit is on page 108 and it is about basic verbs to express ability. It has 12 vocabulary items:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------|-----------------|
| 1- She can run fast | | |
| 2- Speak French | 6-Cook | 10- Skate |
| 3-Lift 65 kg | 7-Swim | 11- Ride a bike |
| 4-Play the guitar | 8-Run | 12- Abilities |
| 5-Jump | 9-Dance | |

The last unit is on page 116 and it is about basic verbs to express actions happening now. It suggests 10 vocabulary items:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1- She's driving the white van | | |
| 2-Turning left | 5- Running | 8-Stealing |
| 3--Riding a bike | 6-Parking | 9-Calling |
| 4-Going out | 7 - Driving | 10-Climbing up |

The following page is about Halloween on page 122. It suggests 12 items:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1- Bat | 8- Broom |
| 2- Moon | 9- Pumpkin |
| 3- Book of spells | 10- Cauldron |
| 4- Witch | 11- Ghost |
| 5- Spider | 12- Halloween |
| 6- Dracula | |
| 7- Frog | |

The last page is about Christmas and it is on page 124. It suggests 17 vocabulary items:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1- Candle | 10- Present |
| 2- Carols | 11- Mince pies |
| 3- Stocking | 12- Turkey |
| 4- Angel | 13- Christmas pudding |
| 5- Snowman | 14- Brussels sprouts |
| 6- Christmas card | 15- Roast potatoes |
| 7- Bell | 16- Cracker |
| 8- Ball | 17- Christmas |
| 9- Christmas tree | |

Visual aids recommended













